(c) and (d) Government have discussed from time to time with the Government of Nepal our concerns about the ISI misusing Nepalese territory and the open India-Nepal border for activities inimical to India's interest. Reports received by Government indicate increasing evidence of ISI using Nepal as a staging post for terrorist activities directed against India. The Nepalese Government have been sensitized on this issue.

The Government of Nepal have assured that their territory would not be used for activities inimical to India's interest and have been extending their cooperation to Government in this regard. Measures have been taken to enhance bilateral cooperation, particularly with regard to implementing effective border management. The concerned agencies of the two Governments remain in regular touch to coordinate efforts to tackle this problem. There are also bilateral institutional mechanisms, such as the Joint Working Group on Border Management and Home Secretary level talks, which have been evolved to specifically develop cooperation on security matters and to address these concerns. In pursuance of the decisions taken in these meetings, both sides have agreed to jointly coordinate measures, including stepping up vigil along the contiguous border districts of India and Nepal, to prevent misuse of the open India-Nepal border for activities directed against India.

Indo-US Agreement to fight Terrorism

2945. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India and the USA have entered into an agreement to jointly fight terrorism;

(b) whether differences exist between Government's stand that of the USA on the definition of a terrorist; and

(c) if so, what are Government views in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Yes, Sir. India and the United States announced their decision January 2000 to constitute a Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism. The first meeting of the Joint Working Group took place on February 7-8, 2000 in Washington D.C. During the recent visit of the US President to India, the two sides expressed their determination to intensify co-operation in combating terrorism.

(b) and (c) In a joint statement issued at the end of the first meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism, the two sides unequivocally

condemned all acts, methods,and practices of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious, or any other purported causes that may be invoked to justify them. India and the United States have also agreed to co-operate on India's proposal in the United Nations for a comprehensive convention on all forms of international terrorism.

US proposals to bring about closer relationship between India and Pakistan

2946. SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether during his recent visit to New Delhi and stopover in Islamabad, the US President had discussed any specific-proposals purported to bring about closer relationship between India and Pakistan.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) During his visit to India and stopover in Islamabad, the US President expressed hope for resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan.

(b) The US President reiterated that the US does not seek to mediate between India and Pakistan. He outlined the US position urging restraint, respect for the Line of Control, refraining from violence and for renewed lines of communication. He also stated that Pakistan must help create conditions for a bilateral dialogue to succeed.

(c) The Government has always been committed to resolving its differences with neighbours through peaceful bilateral dialogue in an atmosphere free from the threat of force and violence.

Clinton's views on South Asia

2947. SHRI H. K. JAVARE GOWDA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that at one point of time US President Clinton described that South Asia as the most dangerous place in the world;